

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**STATEMENT OF
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OFFICE OF PREVENTION, PESTICIDES, AND TOXIC SUBSTANCES
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

MAY 17, 2001

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, Mr. Chairman, Senator Reid, and Members of the Committee. I am honored to have the opportunity to appear before this Committee. Today I'm seeking your confirmation to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances at EPA. As a career civil servant for the last 20 years, it is a privilege and a distinct honor to have the support of President Bush and Governor Whitman to serve EPA as part of this Administration.

Given my background at EPA and in the private sector, I know the importance of developing practical and reasonable solutions to our environmental and public health challenges. As you know, pesticide and chemical regulation can be a contentious subject, with many polarizing issues. If confirmed as the Assistant Administrator, I will foster an atmosphere with our stakeholders to ensure the Agency is accessible and responsive. Given my scientific education and experience working within the various scientific disciplines at EPA, I will aggressively promote decisions that are based in sound science. I will also work to foster consensus-based and common-sense approaches as we advance public health and environmental protection. I look forward to working with Governor Whitman and the EPA team to advance public health and environmental protection.

ROLE OF OPPTS

The Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances (OPPTS) has a variety of programs that are at the forefront of protecting public health and the environment, including regulating pesticides and industrial chemicals, as well as promoting pollution prevention and innovative partnerships with our stakeholders. We have enormous challenges, but we also have a solid record of accomplishments.

During my tenure at EPA, pesticide and industrial chemical regulation has changed dramatically. In the pesticides area, we are implementing the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), which is strengthening food safety for all consumers, especially for infants and children, from pesticides residues in food. We are almost five years into FQPA implementation to ensure pesticides meet the tougher standards, while at the same time ensuring that American agriculture has the tools to continue to provide a healthy and abundant food supply.

KEY PRIORITIES

Despite the progress in recent years, important work remains. Our regulatory oversight of pesticides, industrial chemicals, biotechnology, food safety, and pollution prevention will continue to require sustained and dedicated attention. Making sure our decisions are based on sound science will require continued consultation with the scientific community, peer review and highly trained professionals at EPA. Meeting our commitments under Chemical Right-to-Know, FQPA, protecting children from lead-based paint risks, bringing our stakeholders together to develop workable solutions, and promoting diversity in OPPTS, along with a host of many other issues, will require continued attention.

My priorities include building on the solid progress under the FQPA to reassess the older pesticides while ensuring an abundant food supply. We expect to meet the statutory commitments, while using sound science and extensive stakeholder involvement. OPPTS will further streamline the process to license (register) new pesticides, while seeking new ways to better involve our stakeholders in registration decisions. My office has the further challenge of addressing the cutting edge issues in biotechnology. I believe this technology holds tremendous promise. However, we must continue to advance our science and strengthen the regulatory system to ensure biotechnology products meet rigorous health and environmental standards. Our goal is to assure the public that there is a credible regulatory system in place to for food safety and environmental protection.

On the subject of industrial chemicals, voluntary partnerships on the High Production Volume chemical testing program and the Voluntary Children's Chemical Evaluation Program will continue to be key priorities. Reducing priority PBT pollutants, developing innovative partnerships, managing the lead-based paint program, and the core TSCA programs, will continue to be important areas of focus. I remain committed to our many initiatives with states and industry to advance pollution prevention approaches. Also, given today's global environment, OPPTS will continue the important scientific and regulatory work with the international community. I am firmly convinced that these priorities demonstrate that a healthy environment and a robust economy can go hand in hand.

KEY PRINCIPLES

As I address these and other priority issues, I want to mention my personal operating

philosophy and principles I will follow if confirmed as the Assistant Administrator. They include commitments to:

- Advance the best science to support our regulatory decisions.
- Open communication and regular consultation with our stakeholders.
- Build strong and trusting relationships with all our customers, including Congress, the states, the tribes, the industry, the scientific community, other government agencies, farmers, the international community, and the consumer advocate community.
- Work to quickly address the concerns of our stakeholders.
- Establish partnerships with all stakeholders to develop common-sense and innovative solutions.
- Strengthen partnerships with other Federal agencies, particularly with USDA, FDA; and HUD, NIOSH, and OSHA.
- Promote professionalism, dedication and diversity within the OPPTS staff.

To advance these principles, I have already begun the process of meeting with many stakeholders and employees in OPPTS to hear a variety of opinions on the challenges we face and the future direction we should forge. I believe these steps will strengthen partnerships to ensure we meet the changing demands in safeguarding public health and the environment.

CONCLUSION

I would like to close with two personal observations. My family has a strong commitment to public service. My father served in the Department of the Navy for more than 30 years. Growing up, I always admired my father's government service. During college in the early 1970s, I began my public service as a GS-4 intern, and I am proud to have worked at EPA for more than 20 years. This experience has led me to have a deep appreciation and abiding respect for the importance of reaching for excellence in government.

On another personal note, I have been fortunate to be able to devote the majority of my career to public service and environmental protection. For me, serving in the government, with the goal to help all Americans and their families, has been a distinct privilege. When I reflect on my past service and consider the future, I know that I will face difficult, complex, and serious issues. I have confidence that having a foundation in sound science and commonsense, coupled with inclusive stakeholder participation, will result in quality decisions.

As Assistant Administrator, I hope to achieve national goals with keen sense of the needs and realities of our individual families and communities. I hope that my service will reflect positively on my children, their everyday choices, and the community that each of us live in.

I look forward to working with you on a bipartisan basis to advance the mission of protecting public health and the environment on behalf of the American people. Thank you for the opportunity to

appear before you today. I'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.